

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 6 to 14 and 18 to 21 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 13 and 20 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 11 to 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25 to 27, 29 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,345,104 (Rhoads). Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Rhoads. Claims 2, 5, 14, 16, 21, 24 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Rhoads in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,583,614 (Hasuo). Claims 4, 17 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Rhoads in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,754,822 (Zhao). Claims 7, 8 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Rhoads in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,982,956 (Lahmi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns anti-forgery provisions in an image processing device. Upon scanning an image, the image processing apparatus compares digital watermarks found in the scanned image with specific images. The image processing apparatus processes the scanned image in predetermined ways based on the degree of matching between a digital watermark a specific image. In this way, the image processing apparatus can prevent forgeries by preventing processing of scanned images generated from copy-prohibited documents. Furthermore, the image processing apparatus stores encrypted log information describing user requests for specific types of image processing, such as generating a printed output. In this way, the image processing apparatus can track what types of operations are requested by a user in a secure fashion.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus capable of controlling read operation of an original image by a scanner via a scanner driver. The apparatus includes determination means for comparing image data read by the scanner with specific image data representing a specific image to determine a matching degree, inquiry means for inquiring of a user whether or not to output, via a user interface, when it is determined that the read image data substantially matches the specific image data by the determination means, and means for encrypting and storing log information including the type of specific image when an instruction to output is input via the user interface in response to the inquiry by the inquiry means.

Therefore, an image processing apparatus in accordance with amended independent Claim 1 includes a feature of encrypting and storing log information including the type of matched specific image when a user requests an output of a scanned image which substantially matches the specific image. Accordingly, it is possible to leave as evidence what kind image was read and prevent tampering of the log information through encryption.

In contrast, Rhoads discloses a photocopier that interrupts copying or dials a remote service when an embedded watermark is recognized. Rhoads further discloses a printer having the ability to disable operations or insert tracer information into a document having a watermark. However, Rhoads is completely silent regarding either device having the feature of encrypting and storing log information including the type of specific image when an instruction to output is input via the user interface.

Zhao discloses transmitting a message when digital watermark in which a program code is embedded is read, Lahmi discloses restricting duplication according to duplication restrictions when a duplication is requested, and Hasuo discloses prohibiting or

purposefully corrupting reproduction of a monetary instrument, such as a dollar bill. However, none of the references discloses that which is missing from Rhoads, namely encrypting and storing log information including the type of a specific image that was matched. As such, no combination of the cited references yields the effect of the claimed invention.

As the cited references, either alone or in combination, neither disclose nor suggest at least the feature of encrypting and storing log information, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

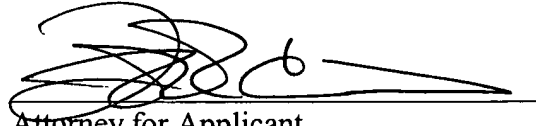
Amended independent Claims 13 and 20 are claims to a method and computer-readable medium substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1. As such, Applicant submits that the discussion from above in regard to Claim 1 applies equally to Claims 13 and 20. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 13 and 20 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Frank L. Cire', written over a horizontal line.

Attorney for Applicant

Frank L. Cire

Registration No. 42,419

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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